

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

1-4. (Canceled)

5. (Currently amended) A method for inhibiting the elevation of blood pressure ~~preventing, ameliorating, or treating hypertension~~ which comprises a long-term oral ingestion of a food or a pharmaceutical composition, wherein said food or pharmaceutical composition comprises comprising at least one member selected from among the group consisting of acetic acid, acetate ion, and acetate in an amount of 0.36 g to 30 g in total (in terms of acetic acid) per 1,000 g of said food or said pharmaceutical composition, and wherein at least one member selected from the group consisting of acetic acid, acetate ion and acetate is ingested, and wherein the total aggregate amount of acetic acid, acetate ion and/or acetate ingested per day is 0.5 g to 5 g, and wherein the period of ingestion of said food or pharmaceutical composition is 3 weeks or longer.

6. – 13. (Canceled)

14. (New) The method according to claim 5, wherein said food or said pharmaceutical composition comprises said acetic acid, acetate ion and/or acetate compounds in an amount of 5 g to 30 g per 1,000 g of said food or said pharmaceutical composition.

15. (New) The method according to claim 5, wherein said food or said pharmaceutical composition comprises said acetic acid, acetate ion and/or acetate compounds in an amount of 10 g to 30 g per 1,000 g of said food or said pharmaceutical composition.

16. (New) The method according to claim 5, wherein said food or said pharmaceutical composition comprises said acetic acid, acetate ion and/or acetate compounds in an amount of 25 g to 30 g per 1,000 g of said food or said pharmaceutical composition.